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" A WORD TO OUR YOUTH "

BY

General K. M. CARIAPPA (Retired)

I talk to you tonight as your big brother, if I may call myself so, with affection and faith which I have always had and will continue to have for and in you. You, I will serve unto my end. I am going to talk to you with all sincerity with the experience I have been fortunate enough to gain in my life in opportunities given to me by God, on matters which I believe may be of some measure of help to you in your labours to prepare yourselves to serve our people in particular and mankind in general when you are full-fledged men and women. I am going to ask you, my brothers and sisters, to work as Indians always with zest and zeal, with brain and muscle, with honesty and sincerity demanding no "pound of flesh" but giving "gallons of your blood and sweat" to provide for higher standard of living for our millions, to give them dignity and self respect in life and to enable India to take her rightful place alongside the big countries in the world of today.

I am in the evening of my life - the night is soon to follow, but you by the grace of God are still in the dawn of yours. So I want to think aloud with you on "Men and Matters" before the night sets in for me. I envy you for being young and by being so, for having years and years of opportunities to serve India and mankind. We must make India the land of our dreams - a land of plenty, prosperity and peace, for all a land which can and will become the beacon light to the ailing millions in this world who are getting too materialistic and who are hungering for spiritual guidance to show them the path to eternal peace and happiness. Our philosophy of the spirit of tolerance, of love and loyalty for mankind, of forget and forgive, of non-violence and pacifism, of truth and sincerity, without in any way surrendering our National self-respect and dignity, can give them this guidance. If this philosophy is understood and practised by you all, in your everyday life in the letter and in the spirit of it, you will be doing a great service to mankind.

I have been frequently asked by students throughout our country "Please Sir, tell us what the duty of the students in India is". My answer has always been and will always be Study, study and study my young friends and learn as much as you can when you are still young. This is your main duty. Unless you study intelligently and unceasingly when you are young, you will not be able to serve India well when you grow up. You should cultivate the habit of sound reading. You should keep yourselves informed of world events generally. Learn one or two foreign languages and one or two Indian languages other than your own in your spare time. You need not be scholars in these languages but just learn them to be able to communicate your thoughts mutually with those who speak to you.

" KEEP OUT OF ACTIVE POLITICS "

Keep well out of active politics - please. This is not your business. This is the politicians "baby": But you study theoretically only the aims and objectives of the various political parties in the country to help you choose the party you may wish to belong to when you grow up.

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You have barely eight to ten years of your young life to study in. Do not waste time on useless matters during your student days such as getting actively mixed up in politics, going on strikes - because your examination papers are too difficult or your fees have been raised or a pal of yours who had been naughty and so he/she has been rusticated and so on. Make your complaints, if any in a constitutional manner. Every second of your student days is precious. Get the fullest service from your teachers who are paid by the tax-prayer to teach you to prepare you to become useful citizens of the country when you grow up.

Do not neglect your health. Good, wholesome food, properly planned taking of physical exercises, adequate rest and sleep, amusements and entertainments in sensible proportions are all important matters. Talking of amusements, please do not let some cheap music make you neglect the grandeur of our good music. Your parents and higher authority should see that you get adequate and well balanced food. Mal-nutrition produces poor health which in turn retards physical and mental growth. You must be physically and mentally virile at all times, unfitness in one or both is a serious handicap to your studies.

Have some hobbies in life. Go round India or your own State if you cannot afford an Indian tour, during your holidays walking, or cycling or in bullock carts or on camels to see the glories of nature, of history and of our ancient civilisation of India. Be adventurous. You must have a sense of humour for, without it you merely become a hard boiled robot. Be cheerful always. Keep your chin up and with grim determination face all your problems bravely, like a man and not become just a worm and moan about the problems. Learn to take a 'ticking off' by your teachers or elders like a man. Do not sulk if you are told off by some one for any mistake you may make. Never offer excuses for not doing a job given to you unless you are asked why - and when asked give your explanation only and not any excuses. Own up your mistake straightaway. Do not hide them until you are found out. You must get to understand peoples of other countries. So do everything you can to have many friends in foreign lands. This you can do by having Pen-Friends. Do not please get into the bad habit of criticising other countries about their ways of life, politics and so on. Put your own home right first and then talk of others, if you need so talk at all.

" HAVE CHARACTER "

With good education and good health if you have not character, and have no sense of discipline, of loyalty, of duty, of value of time and of team work, you might as well pack up, for you cannot be a good citizen of India or of the world. These are not commodities you can buy off a counter in a shop or order by post. They have to be inculcated in you from your infancy by your parents in your homes and your teachers in schools. Each one of these is an essential and indispensable ingredient for the recipe to produce a good citizen of this democratic world. Character above all is most essential. Your academic qualifications alone without this will not help you in life. We must have a National character which alas we do not quite have now because some of us think not in terms of India and Indians but in terms of only the States we come from and the languages we speak in. This is wicked - unpardonable.

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RESPECT TRADITIONS "

Be truthful in your thoughts and in your work. Make no promise which you cannot keep. Give no hopes which you cannot fulfil. There is no greater joy in life than to have the faith and confidence in oneself by ones superiors, equals, subordinates and friends. Do not ever speak ill of another person unless you are certain of facts and figures. Even if you are say to yourselves why speak. You will then keep friends. Respect the traditions of your Schools and Colleges to help you build espirit-de-corps which is necessary for good work. Be thorough in everything you do. Do not be slip-shod. Work harder when you are not being watched than when your work is under observation. Be punctual on all occasions. Be tidy in your dress in private and in public. It does not matter what clothes you wear, whether European style or Indian style - as long as they are clean, tidy smart and correctly worn. It is unnecessary to wear "Pansy clothes" Remember clothes alone do not make you a true Indian. It is your character and your thoughts and action in relation to your fellow citizens, your moral integrity in the service - official or otherwise you render to the country which show up whether you are a true patriot or a mere hypocritical lip server.

A word about Leadership. You have many battles to fight in life - not battles with weapons of destruction but those with social and economic problems. You can fight these well if you will train yourselves now to become good leaders. Leadership at all levels and in all walks of life is what India needs today very badly. Leaders in politics, in business, in education, in defence and security services and so on are required in thousands. My young friends, learn to obey you can then command ; learn to be a good servant then you can be a good master.

" OUR PHILOSOPHY IS GLORIOUS "

Think of God daily and thank him for what he has given you. Our philosophy is glorious in which India's genius truly lies. It will be unfortunate for India if you grow up ignorance of its heritage, towards which other nations and civilisations are thirstfully turning for comfort and guidance. You must give this your serious attention. The world is, alas, getting more and more materialistic neglecting the spiritual aspects of life and this brings in its wake many vices in mankind - greed for power, greed for money, dishonesty, insincerity, selfishness and so on. Be kind to those who are less fortunate than you are in life and take delight in giving them happiness.

I am sorry there has been some wholesale condemnation of our youth by some. It is often said "the students of today are bad - they are indisciplined" and so on. As far as I am concerned, there is really nothing wrong with you at all. There are of course some naughty boys and girls amongst you and they must be spanked properly: If there is any one to be blamed for some of the ugly incidents of disorderly students' demonstrations and misbehaviour and so on at some educational institutions, I think some of the grown-ups should take the blame. If we have good and really well paid teachers who will pay more personal and intimate attention to you in your education, there can be no time for these disorderly happenings. They will see that unscrupulous outsiders do not get a chance to make you their tools for their political gains.

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" BE WELL DISCIPLINED "

Be well disciplined at all times obeying the orders of your superiors and conforming to the established rules of society and working as a team. Indiscipline in you is your enemy. You will be the sufferer in the end. No country can become great unless its people are well disciplined and have a high sense of civic duty. You can help in this. For this reason, I have been advocating compulsory military training for all able bodied people in India particularly the Youth. The N.C.C, the A.C.C. and Boy Scouts Movement are good in their own way but they are touching only the fringe of the problems. When I say military training, I do not say it in a bellicoes or belligerent spirit but it is training to bring out in a person all essential qualities that are required of a good citizen.

" HAVE DEFINITE AIM IN LIFE "

As for aim in Life, I find many a student has no definite aim in life. With quite a number it seems to be just getting an Arts Degree and then looking up Newspapers under the 'Wanted Column' and applying for clerical jobs. This is not good enough. You must make up your mind as early in life as possible as to what exactly you want to be and then plan your education to help you achieve this aim. Your parents and your teachers should help you in this most important matter when bringing you up. In your work to achieve your aim, be courageous - mentally, morally and physically. Courage in this form is yet another essential quality that is required in you. If your conscience is clear and you are convinced of your principles in your life go ahead. Never say die. Remember nothing is impossible to a person of character, or courage, of clear conscience and commonsense. You have all these. These are all latent in you but they must be developed. Now is the time to do it.

A word about good manners. Politeness and courtesy to others cost you nothing but they will win for youx friends and well wishers. Consideration for other's comforts and feelings must come before you think of your own. Speak softly. Do not speak loudly. Think deeply and clearly before you speak and do not be a verbal bore. Learn to be a good listener. Arrogance and conceit are signs of weakness and they are cheap. Getting angry and shouting in conversation is bad manners - also a sign of weakness of your case and of your character. Learn to be modest of your capabilities. Respect your elders and your teachers Do not forget your parents as you grow up. Remember they brought you up to be what you are. Respect their wishes. Do not hurt their feelings or cause them distress by doing things which you know they would not like you to do. Respect woman. Remember we call our beloved country - Mother India.

" DIGNITY OF LABOUR "

Dignity of labour is yet another essential quality we must all imbibe for the good of our country. Acquire this early in life. Be prepared to sweep, to dig, to wash, to carry loads and so on to earn your bread and butter by your own sweat. If we want to make India great every one of us must have a high sense of dignity of labour. There is nothing degrading in doing any kind of manual labour.

In Social Service work, you must take part but for goodness sake not at the expense of your studies. When you do it, have a definite

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plan of what you want to do and organise yourselves properly to carry it out. However, your main job is to study and do social work only giving a part of your leisure hours and part of your holidays for it. But remember you must have some leisure hours and part of your holidays for it. But remember you must have some leisure and some holidays. You cannot be expected to work in your Schools and Colleges and then during leisure hours and holidays to keep hard at Social service work. You do require some rest mentally and physically.

The craze for jobs in cities must stop. Our cities do require some bright young men but our villages and the farms cry for more. Remember it is the farmer who is the real backbone of the country. His is a noble profession - of production of food. In these days of scientific and mechanised farming, it is essential that the millions of our villagers are given proper advice and guidance. Who else can give these better than you our educated youth. You can apply to the land in practice what you have learnt in theory in your schools and colleges. This may not be remunerative to start with but can you not see the joy you will have enriching our most important industry - primary industry of agriculture and animal husbandry. So please go to the country, I mean to the villages in larger numbers and do not be attracted by the footlights, frills and frolics of city life. Urbanisation in the manner that is going on in India, today at the expense of ruralisation is most detrimental to the economic interests of our country. India wants thousands of technicians, You have great opportunities in this line of work. India must be built up rapidly economically: and industrially. We cannot afford to rest on our oars and just live on our past glories. There is so much to be done. Let us talk less and get on with our work more. We have got to work, work and work morning, noon and night. There should be no question of only so many hours of work a day nor only so many days of work a week. Work must go on until it is finished - until India's economy and industry are brought up to the standards of big countries. Look at Germany and look at Japan, the two defeated countries in the last War. They were almost completely destroyed. Many thought that it would take them a long time to rise again, if ever. How wrong it was to have thought so. Look at them now - two of the most prosperous countries of the world. How did this happen? Not by only talking and by having a number of grand plans on paper, but by hard work and determination to rebuild their countries. Their Governments and people worked as one. They sacrificed their comforts, their amusements and their all to regain their proper place in the world. They did not waste their time on "languages" and such other matters, of no immediate importance to their nations but got down to put their right first and by God they have done it. We have these the virile people to emulate in our work to build up our country. Let not provincialism, and languages and religion interfere with your work to build India. No sacrifice should be too great for you to keep India strong.- to keep India united - to keep our Independence for all time. We do not want to be a subject race again; we will not be if we do not allow ourselves to be guided and inspired by isms foreign to our own philosophy and our own culture and our own ways of life. Turn your back to foreign isms. Let us have faith in ourselves and in our ability to build our country according to our own way and our own isms. Let us of course take good things from other countries but please let us not throw our loyalty as some seem to want, to isms beyond our frontiers. India wants you to be Indians and serve her always as such. So work hard now as disciplined individuals to serve her and the world well when you grow up.

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" BE THE ARCHITECTS "

I hope you will take all that I have said tonight in the spirit I have spoken. I repeat, I have the greatest love for you and infinite faith in your ability and your sense of duty to build the India of our dreams. India of tommorrow needs you to be fit in every respect to lead her millions to a life of plenty, prosperity and peace and to make her an effective member of the own World Federation which is the dream of us all. By God's grace, we will have this and you will be its architects.

God Bless you all.